

1641 2/5

THE PROTESTATION PROTESTED:

OR,

A short Remonstrance, shewing what
is principally required of all those that have or
doe take the last *Parliamentary*
PROTESTATION.

ECCL. 5. 45.

*When thou vowest a Vow unto God, deferre not to pay it; for hee
hath no pleasure in fooles: pay that which thou hast vowed.
Better it is that thou shouldest not vow, then that thou shoul-
dest vow, and not pay.*

By m

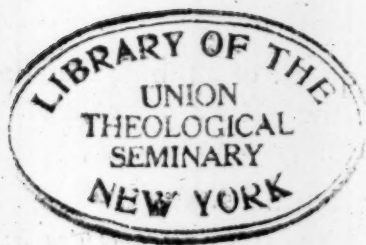
Buston

[Henry Buston]



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THE PROTESTATION PROTESTED.

ECCLES. 5. 4, 5.

*When thou vowest a vow unto GOD, deferre not
to pay it: for he hath no pleasure in fooles: pay
that which thou hast vowed. Better it is that
thou shouldest not vow, then that thou shouldst
vow and not pay.*



Hen in the Scale of Conscience
rightly informed, I weigh the
words of the *Protestation*, and
of this Exhortation of the Holy
GHOST together, I cannot but
tremble, when I see what small
account most men doe make of so
solemne a Vow, as they so so-
lemnly take upon them in the said PROTESTATION.

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For

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For when Ministers and People have taken the *Protestation*, and have solemnly vowed to maintaine the Doctrine of our Church, so far as it is opposite to Popery; Doe they withall presently set upon the performance of this their *Vow*? Doe they not further deferre to pay it? Surely if they doe deferre it, the holy Ghost calls them *fooles*, in whom God hath *no pleasure*. And it had beene better for them never to have *vowed*, then to *vow* and not pay.

Object. But how doe they deferre to pay their *Vow* thus made?

Answ. In that they doe not presently renounce, and protest against all Popery, and for ever disclaime and abandon all Communion with it.

Obj. Why, will they say, what Communion have we Protestants with Popery? We do all renounce it.

Answ. In words we doe renounce it, but indeed wee retaine it, and have close Communion with it: so farre are we from keeping the *Vow* thus made.

Obj. But what Popery doe wee Protestants of the Church of *England* retaine with us, or hold Communion with?

Answ. Wee hold Communion with Popery, so long as wee doe publicly retaine and maintaine any of the Doctrines of Popery. And the Doctrines of Popery which wee retaine and maintaine, are these. First, The imposition of the Liturgie. Secondly, The Discipline. Thirdly, The Government. Fourthly, The Ceremonies.

Obj. But these being as yet established by Law, wee may not cast them off, till the Law which set them up, be abrogated, which must be by Act of *Parliament*. And we protest against Popery to cast it out, as farre as lawfully we may, and no otherwise.

Answ.

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Answ. First, All Lawes are to be interpreted according to their cleare intention and end. Now the Law for Reformation never intended to allow or set up Popery in this Church of *England*. Secondly, If any humane Lawes be found to be contrary to Gods Word, they are invald and void *ipso facto*. And it will appeare, that imposition of a devised Liturgie, humane Rites and Ceremonies, Prælatieall government and Discipline, are directly contrary to Gods word. Thirdly Having once made this solemne *Protestation* and now, against all Popery, and finding that the particulars aforesaid are branches of Popery, wee are bound *ipso facto* forthwith to have no more *Communion* with them, but utterly to renounce them.

Ob. But what if the *Parliament* did not intend or understand by Popery, the foresaid things, as the Liturgie, Discipline, Government, Ceremonies used in our Church, and by Law established? Shall we presume to extend the sense of the *Protestation* further then the first makers thereof intended. And the Prelates (wee presume) would never so readily have subscribed to the *Protestation*, had they dreamed any such sense to lye hid under the name of Popery, as their Hierarchy, with their Liturgie, Rites, Ceremonies, Discipline, Government; for then they had in the *Protestation* protested against all these, and should have given their hands and votes, for the rooting of them out of this Church.

Answ. First, This we are sure of, and 'tis most cleare by the expresse words of the *Protestation*, that they intended it against all Popery. Secondly, They expresse themselves and professe thus farre, that the words of the *Protestation* are not to be extended to the maintaining of

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any forme of Worship, Discipline, or Government; nor of any Rites or Ceremonies in the said Church of *England*. Ergo, wee doe not, we may not protest for the maintenance of these. Thirdly, suppose that at the first making of the *Protestation* in the *Parliament*, these particulars afore-mentioned were not reckoned in the Catalogue of all Popery: yet no good Christian will or can deny, that the Honourable House of Commons did not at all intend to exclude what ever should be found to pertaine to *Popery* as a branch thereof. And therefore we may boldly conclude, that if the forementioned things shall be found to be, and that no small branches of Popery, the *Protestation* hath an edge to cut them off all at one stroke. Fourthly, we are all in an erected hope of such a Reformation intended by this most noble *Parliament*, as cannot justly challenge the name of Reformation, unlesse all Popery be made to be packing, which of necessity must carry with her all trinkets and baggage, with all her pompous equipage, among whose sumpters, the Hierarchy, with all its *Pontificalibus* of Service, Ceremonies, Discipline, Traine, Courts, may challenge to goe in the formost ranke. Fifthly, and lastly, suppose it could be supposed by any rationall man, that the House of Commons could have no such thought as impliciteley to include the aforesaid particulars in the fardell of Popery: or that they could possibly intend the maintaining of those things still, of which they expressly say, *That the words of the Protestation are not to bee extended to the maintaining of any Forme of Worship, Discipline, or Governement, Rites or Ceremonies*; or that these things should not be removed but maintained still: What then? Shall private and particular Christians, knowing these things to be Popery and Antichristian

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tichristian, being also bound by their solempne *Vow* and *Protestation*, never reforme themselves, untill they see a general Reformation over the whole Land? What if they shall never live to see this? Will they against their Conscience, against their knowledge, against their *Vow* and *Protestation*, live and die Voraries and Communicants in that Service, Schoole-boyes and Punies under the *Ferula* of that Discipline, Vassals under that Government, Conformists to those Rites and Ceremonies, all which are very Popery and Popish Innovations?

Ob. But how doth it appeare, that the fore-mentioned particulars are branches of Popery? If our Conscience could be convinced hereof by the Word of God, then surely are we bound both by Gods Word, and by our *Vow* and *Protestation* presently to renounce and abandon these things, and to have no longer any Communion with them.

Ans. It is most true, that nothing can resolve, regulate, and settle the Conscience, but the Word of God in the evidence of it. Now most cleare it is by the Scripture, that the Liturgie, Discipline, Government, Rites and Ceremonies of the Church of *England*, are all of them so many branches of Popery. For prooffe hereof: first for the Liturgie; this is a branch of Popery in two generall respects: First, in regard of the whole frame and matter of it, as being translated out of the Romish Latin Liturgie, as is confessed in the Booke of Martyrs; see for this the late Parallel between the English Liturgie, and the Masse-booke. I omit to say any thing heere of the many vicious particulars throughout the Service-booke, which run as the corrupt blood through all the veines of it, and are by others sufficiently discovered. This is enough to shew it to be Popish. The second ge-
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nerall is, the imposition of it upon all mens Consciences. Which bare imposition alone, were the Liturgie in it selfe never so free from other faults, yet being a Service of mens devising, the imposition (I say) makes it a branch of Popery. For Popery (wee know) is Antichristianisme. And Antichristianisme is an opposition to Christ, so as this imposition upon the Conscience is an opposing and overthrowing of Christs Kingly Office, who is the sole King and Lord over the Soule and Conscience; an office incommunicable to any Creature, or Power in Heaven or Earth. Whereupon *John* saith, *who is a lyar, but he that denyeth that Iesus is the Christ, He is Antechrist.* Now to deny *Iesus* to be the sole annointed King of his Church, is to deny him to be *the Christ*. And he that sets up man as Lord over the Conscience, in prescribing and imposing what Service of God hee pleaseth of humane invention, denyeth *Iesus* to bee the Christ, to wit, to be the sole King of his Church, who is the sole Law-giver to the Common-wealth of Israel, in his spirituall Kingdome.

* Ioh. 2.
22.

And for this cause the Pope is proved to be that Antichrist, who is * *the Adversary that exalteth himselfe above all that is called GOD, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in or over the Temple of God* (which is every mans conscience) *shewing himselfe that he is GOD.* Now in nothing doth Antichrist exalt himselfe more, then in usurping Christs power in giving Lawes, whereby hee exerciseth a Tyranny over the true Temple of God, over the spirituall Kingdome of Christ. And this tyrannay is cheifly exercised in usurping dominion over our Faith and Conscience in the worship and service of God, which they place in the Liturgie. This is the highest pride and presumption of Antichrist that possibly
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* 2 Thef.
2. 4.

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can be. This is that *wil-worship*, or a worship invented of mans will and choyce, which the Apostle * expressly ^{Col. 2.} condemneth and brandeth, as *the highest Tyranny, which to bee subiect unto is the spoiling and cheating men of their* ^{23.} *salvation* (as we read at large *Col. 2. v. 8. 18.*) and *a separating us from our Head and King Christ, v. 19.* and *an evacuating of his death, v. 20.* The Imposition therefore of a *Liturgie* upon the Conscience devised by men, and pretended for the worship and service of God, yea and the onely divine publike worship of his Church, is a maine branch of Popery, as being the Character of Antichrist or Antichristianisme, which is the very with Popery; Popery & Antichristianisme being convertible termes. Thus it is as plaine, as brief, that the imposing of a *Liturgie* of mans devising upon the Conscience is the pretended Service of God (though indeed it is rather the service of many, and which God condemneth as ^{Math. 15,} *a vaine worship of him*) is a maine branch of Popery. ^{9.}

Secondly, for Ceremonies of mans devising in the worship of God, and imposed upon the Conscience, these being the same nature with, as being a part of the *Liturgie*, are by the same reasons (as before) proved to be Popery.

Thirdly, for Discipline (which stands chiefly in correction of manners, and inflicting of Censures as Excommunication; such as is and hath beene exercised in the Church of *England* by the *Prelates* ever since the pretended Reformation in this point) that this is also another maine branch of Popery, doe but compare it with that Discipline in the Church of Rome, and you shall find it in all points; so to jump and agree, as you must of necessity conclude, if Romes Discipline be Popery, then certainly our English Discipline is Popery too. For in nothing (I say) doe they differ, so as the Disci-

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pline of our Church being false, and counterfeit, because Popish; and so our Church wanting the true Discipline, which ought to be one of the three markes of a visible true Church, as it is noted in our Homilies: the Church of *England* wants this marke at the least. And if the *Sacraments* be not *duty administred*, as being mixed and corrupted with a service of mans devising, and ministred pell mell (as in the Lords Super) to ignorant and profane persons: then for ought I see, it wants a second marke of a visible true Church. And if (as lately, and still in many places) the word of God in the preaching of it be generally corrupted, as when the full, and free liberty of it in sundry points of Evangelicall truth, is restrained and prohibited by orders and edicts, not yet called in, and damned; by this reckoning it should want the third marke, & so much the more, in case the calling of the Ministry it selfe should prove a peice of Popery too. But this by the way onely it leads us the way to the next point, which is the Government of the Church of *England*.

Fourthly then, for the Government of the Church of *England*, by Archbishops, Bishops, Arch-Deacons, Deanes, Commissaries, Officials, and the rest of that fraternity: if this be not Popery, yea and a top-branch of it, I know not what is? sure we are, not any one of all this rabble is found to be in the Scripture; and therefore of divine Institution this Government is not: And consequently, Christian it is not. It must needs then be of Antichrists Order, and Papall meerely. So as if Romes Hierarchy be the top-branch of Popery in that Church: how can it be denyed, that the Hierarchy here in *England* is the top-branch of Popery in this Church? For if we looke upon this Hierarchy from *Canterbury* to *arile*, and goe through all their Courts, their Officers, the

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their Offices, and Administrations therein, wee shall therein behold the perfect image of the Papall Beast, from horne to hoofe. And if any will object here that the subordinate Ministers beare a part in this Government: (alas!) that's but a meere mockery. For these are but the Prelates *Curates*, and a company of Priests little differing from Romes Order of Priesthood in the estimate of our Prelates, saving that they are not shaven, and have beene of late prevented of being Sacrificers. But a part in the Hierarchicall Government they have none, unlesse a dumb Priest commonly, or some Doctor now and then be the mouth to thunder out Excommunication in their Courts, which the poore Curate at the Commissaries beck must publish in the Congregation. And to these Curates consideration I refer it, whether they be able truly out of good premises to conclude themselves to be the Ministers of Christ lawfully called, whom all of them doe immediately derive their Ministry from the Antichristian Hierarchy, or Papall Prelacie, as the sole foundation thereof. But this suffice briefly to prove the government of the Church of *England* by Arch-Bishops and Bishops, &c. (False and usurped Titles) to be a top-branch of Popery. If here Obj^a. it be objected, that the Government of Arch-Bishops and Diocesan Bishops was before Popery came up, or Antichrist was mounted on his throne: I answer, first, that the Government of Arch-Bishops and Diocesan Bishops was anciently much different from the Papall Hierarchicall Government afterwards, whose Courts and sole Prelaticall Jurisdictions were not known in the Primitive Ages long after the Apostles. Secondly, the Government of Arch-Bishops and Diocesan Bishops, at the very best, and when they first sprung up, was even
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from the wel-head corrupted, as being an humā device, and the first spring of the Mistery of iniquity which the further it run, the more corrupt it grew, till it had its full confluence in muddy Tiber, the See of Rome, by whose inundation Antichrist, having hoysed up his maine sailes, could easily compassse in the whole Easterne Christian World. Thirdly, the Hierarchicall Government in *England*, as a maine arme of that sea; so it hath altered nothing of its former property, when it was a limb of the Papacy. Saving that before the Reformation they held immediately from the Pope, and now especially of later dayes, they hold by the same false pretended title which the Pope himselfe holds by, namely from Christ, and by divine Authority. Witnesse Dr. *Hals* sweatty discourses. And Dr. *Poclington* shewes us a brieft Pedigree of the present titular Arch-Bishop of *Canterbury*, saying, * *Miserable men were wee, if he that now sitteth Arch-Bishop of Canterbury, could not derive his succession from Saint Augustine, St. Augustine from St. Gregory, St. Gregory from St. Peter.* So he. Only, here he failes, and so becomes miserable, that though he can prove *Canterburies* succession from Rome, yet never Rome's from *Peter*. And so a severall misery followes upon it, that our Hierarchicall Government being a limb of the Papall, and so a top-branch of Popery, it is now universally of all good Christians in *England* protested against, as worthy to be cut off and cast out, as a fruitlesse withering branch, and to be plucked up by the rootes as a tree twice dead, and as a plant not of Gods planting.

Ob. But if it be thus, that for the reasons aforesaid the whole Government of the Church of *England* ought to be irradiated, together with the Liturgie, Discipline

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pline, and Ceremonies, in stead thereof.

I anwere briefly : First, understanding the Church of *England* to be none other, then a nationall Church it will be very difficult, if not rather impossible to constitute it so, as is agreeable in all points to a true and visible Congregation of Christ. For a particular Church, or congregation rightly collected and constituted, consists of none, but such as are visible living members of Christ the head, and visible Saints under him, the one and onely King of Saints : but so is it not with a Nationall Church : all the members thereof are not visible Saints, or visible living members, when the greatest part of a Nation commonly is found to consist of persons either ignorant or profane. * For as the Scripture saith, Though the Children of Israel bee as the sand of the Sea, yet but a remnant shall be saved. And yet that was a Nationall Church without parallel : so as in the Reformation of such a nationall Church as this, which hath been so universally overspread with profanenesse, and darknesse, so long beslaved under the yoke of Prelaticall tyranny, under Egyptian Task-masters, under manifold Romish Superstitions, formall service, worship, universall false and loose Discipline, innumerable either false, or unprofitable, or idle Teachers, Non-residents, * dumb doggs, so as whole Counties for want of good Ministers, (who have beene every where cast out) and whole Countries, yea the whole Land in comparison are overgrowne with Papists, or Atheists, or those that know not what true Religion means: where shall wee begin to reforme? Alas! in comparison of the true Religion indeed (which stands not in a bare professiō, but in power not in a bare name of Christianity, but in

* *Isa.* 10.
22.

* *Isa.* 26.
10.

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the nature of it ; not in the mixture of mens inventions , but in the purity of Christs owne Ordinances) the Religion in *England* is very farre degenerate, and but a while agoe was almost wholly slidden back into the very puddle of Popery : yet not all, but as it was said of the Church of *Sardis*, *Thou hast a name that thou livest, but thou art dead; yet in it were a few names*, which had not defiled their garments : Even so in *England*, there are a few, yea I trust many thousands of Saints, though (in comparision of the whole Land) but a few names, a remnant; whose hearts are perfect before God. Where then shall the Reformation begin now in *England*? surely in the new forming of a Church, such as God requireth in his word, Christs voyce must first be heard, to call forth his sheep, and to gather them into their flocks, and folds. For *Εκκλησία* the Church is properly a congregation of beleivers, called out from the rest of the world. For so saith the Lord * *Come out from among them and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you.* A strange speech, *And be ye separate*? Surely Gods people must bee seperatists from the world, and from false Churches, to become a pure and holy people unto the Lord. And hee saith to the Prophet *Jeremy*, * *If thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth; let them returne unto thee, but returne not thou unto them.* And surely in a corrupt Church (as this is, and a long time hath beene, by reason of the great Apostacie, and especially the wickednesse of the Prelates) we should doe as the Apostles did when they came to plant Churches in a Country where the Gospell had not been formerly preached. * First they taught the people, and then those which heard and beleaved, were formed into a Church or Congregation. But here are (blessed be
God

* 2 Cor.
6, 17.

* Jer, 15,
20.

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God) many people already fitted to make up holy assemblies or Churches. Well then, let it be the first degree of Reformation to begin and call forth all those into severall Congregations, who are fitted, and who desire to draw neere unto Christ in a holy Communion with him in the purity of his Ordinances. And thus let Gods word run, and have a free passage, in calling in such as God shall draw unto him, in what place soever they shall be found. Nor can we think at the first especially, that every assembly of people collected in their severall Parishes, is fit to make up a Congregation, and so qualified, as Christ requireth. For how many Parishes in *England* will be found, where scarce one is able to give a reason of the hope that is in him?

Ob. But shall not good Preachers be set up in every Parish, that the People may be instructed, and so fitted to be members of a Cōgregation, such as afore is mentioned.

Ans. No doubt of that, so so farre as is possible to provide Preachers.

Ob. But what shall the People do in the meane time, who are ignorant, and profane, though not notoriously wicked? For have they not received Baptisme? Are they not Christians? shall they not then be admitted into the Communion of the other Sacrament?

Ans. For this, every Minister ought to bee very diligent and carefull to see, that ordinary profane and ignorant persons be not admitted to the Sacrament * The lame or the blind is not to be offered up in Sacrifice. ^{Deut. 15. 21}

Ob. But admit that such as are ordinary profane persons, and have little or no knowledge of God, bee admitted to the Sacrament pell mell: may not godly persons communicate with them, and therein not sin?

Ans. For that, let such as are godly look to it. For

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- if Gods Ordinances bee profaned (as they are by profane and ignorant persons comming to the Lords Table, then others also that communicate with them are guilty of the same prophanation with them. * *A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.* The Apostle applies it to a mixt Communion. *Let us keep the feast* (saith he) *to wit, in participating of Christ our Passeeover in the Sacrament, not with the old leaven, &c.* And thereupon hee tels them, *I writ unto you in an Epistle not to company with fornicators, &c.* And * *This ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, hath any inheritance in the Kingdome of Christ. Be not therefore partakers with them.*

Ob. But if Congregations be so mixed, as they cannot, or are not secured, shall godly men for that cause deprive themselves of the Ordinance?

- Ans.* First, there is no necessity, that men in using the Ordinance should sin by communicating with others in the profanation of holy things. Secondly, It is not Gods Ordinance, that his holy things should bee profaned. * *Cast not your pearles before Swine, nor your holy things to dogs.* * *Who required these things at your hands, to tread in my Courts?* And yet their Oblations, their Sabbathes, their *solemne assemblies*, were Gods Ord. But because they were polluted and profaned by those that joyned in them, therefore the Lord abhors them. * *wash you, make you cleane, &c.*

Ob. But what's this to godly persons communicating with prophane?

- * *2 Theſ.* *Ans.* To communicate with known evill doers (which even in their presuming to communicate in the Ordinances, do evil in their doing of evil, is to partake of their evil deeds. * *Be not mingled with such* (saith) the

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the Apostle) *that they may be ashamed.* And v. 6. *we command you Brethren, in the name of our Lord Iesus Christ, that ye withdraw your selves from every brother, that walketh disorderly, &c.*

Ob. But if it be so, where can a godly man communicate without sin? For where are not the Congregations mixed?

Ans. It is true, that if there be none other Congregations allowed, but such as are in Parishes, this confession cannot be avoyded. Therefore of necessity there must be Liberty granted of setting up Churches, or Congregations, where *Christs* Ordinances are administered in their *purity*, and so where none are admitted members of the Congregation, but such as are approved of by the whole Assembly for their *profession* and *conversation*, as against which there is no just exception.

Ob. But would you have other Congregations, then such as are limited to every Parish? How will this stand with a Nationall Church, such as is the Church of *England*? This would make a division and separation.

Ans. We must look in the first place, what *Christ* commandeth, and what manner of Congregations he requireth, and how qualified. If a State will set up a Nationall Church, wherein many things out of reason of State are tolerated, and prescribed for *order* sake (as they call it) and if there be such a necessity, necessity hath no Law: but let not this exclude and barre out the free use of such Congregations, as whereof the spirituall Common-wealth of *Israel* consisteth, over which *Christ* as King immediately raigneth by his Spirit and Word in the beauty and purity of his *ordinances*. Let not the Consciences of *Gods* people be bound, where *Christ* hath purchased *liberty*. And where *Christs* Congregati-

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ons are set up, however they are separate from the world in the corruptions thereof, yet they are not separate from the Civil State, but are peaceable members thereof, subject and obedient to all the good and just Laws thereof. Yea where such Congregations are erected and allowed of by a Civil State, they are both a strength and beauty, and procure many blessings unto it. They are unto a Civil State, as that *fulminatrix legio*, that thundring Legion in the Emperour *Antoninus* his Army (as he called it) which consisting wholly of Christians, among his other Heathen Legions, did by their Prayers procure refreshing showers to the whole Army, when it was sore distressed with drowt, and terrible storms on the other side, to the disconfeiture of the enemy. And therefore the Apostle exhorts his Christians

* 1 Tim. * to pray for Kings, and such as are in authority, that we may
2. lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godlinesse and honesty. And Jer. 29, 7. Pray unto the Lord for the City of your captivity: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace; implying, if it is the duty of Civil Princes and states, heathen or Christian, to protect, or tollerate the true Christian Religion in their Kingdomes as well, as of the true Christians, and Professors to pray for them. For Christs Kingdome being spirituall, is so farr from being any prejudice to Civil states, that it is the very glory and safety of them. And therefore the Emperour *Domitian* (under whom was moved the second persecution, and by whom the Apostle *John* was banished into *Pathmos*) hearing that *Christs* Kingdome was celestially, and not of this World, recalled his Edict for the Persecution (*Euseb. Eccl. Hist. li. 3. c. 15.*) so as thereupon it ceased.

Ob. But that there shall be an order of Church government,

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ment established in a nationall Church, and withall a liberty left for other Church assemblies, exempted from this government, this may be a meanes to foment factious and envious emulations in a State, to the disturbing of the peace thereof.

Ans. For this, first, there be good Lawes for civill government. Seriously, that anyone among the exempted Congregations doe incorrigably misbehave themselves, the Law can take order with them. Thirdly, let no man blame them, before they cry them. Fourthly, it hath beene an old stratageme of Satan still to lay all the blame of what ever disaster, upon the Christians, as *Nero* did. Fifthly, it cannot be expected, but where ever the Gospel commeth in its power and purity, it will kindle coales, and stirre up debate, as *Christ* saith, it sets the *Father against the Sonne, and the Sonne against the Father, &c.* But this is accidentally, in respect of the malignant objects it meetes withall, though naturall too, in respect of the good subjects, in whom it is, and by whom it is sincerely professed, for it fills them with zeale and plaine dealing in reprovng of sinne, which the world cannot away withall. Thus it hath done in all ages. And God in the *beginning after the fall, upon the revealing of *Christ*, put an unreconcilable enmity, and deadly forehead betweene the seed of the Serpent, and of the woman, betweene the Elect and Reprobate to the worlds end. And if for this every civill state should shut out the true Religion, where would there be left any true Church upon the earth?

Obj. But the Church-way of independency is too strict, and cannot be content with a mediocrity, but aspires to such a perfection of purity, as men are not capable of; and therefore such will of necessity be envied and

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maligned, which will be cause of divisions.

Ans. As i fall true Christians were not exhorted every where, and so bound, to strive for perfection, so much as is possible, As we read *Matb. 5. 20. 48. Phil. 3. 12. Col. 1. 28. and 4. 12. 2 Tim. 3. 17.* and every where in the Scripture is perfect holinessse required, as *Ephes. 4. 12. 2 Cor. 7. 1. Let us* (saith the Apostle) *cleanse our selves from all filthinesse of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holinesse in the feare of God.* See also *Heb. 5. 12. and 6. 1. &c.* And for envy, were there but once set up amongst us some such Congregations, as come neereſt to the rule of Gods Word, both in Church. constitutions, and in Graces ſutable, they would draw no leſſe love and liking to them, when we ſhould ſee in them the beauty and glory of Chriſt more ſhining forth in them, then ever this Land hath yet ſcene. And however the world accounts ſtriſtneſſe, yet none are admitted members thereof, but ſuch as are both willing and deſirous, and doe freely enter into Covenant to obſerve all the conditions and orders thereof according to Gods Word: and who ſo are over, in, and of this Congregation, they find in it nothing that is grievous, but Chriſts ſweetneſſe * whoſe yoke is eaſie, and his burthen light.

* *Mat. ii.*
29. 30.

Obj. But if ſuch Congregations were ſet up, which are not confined to any one Pariſh, but collected out of many places, or out of many Pariſhes, it would perhaps ſtirre up the Patochiall Miniſters, or ſome at leaſt, to envy and malignity, when they ſhould ſee the beſt Chriſtians in all their Pariſh to be under another Miniſtry, and members of another Congregation, and by this meanes alſo ſhould their wages be diminished.

Ans. Firſt, if Chriſtians, living in a Pariſh, ſhall find juſt cauſe of ſeparating themſelves from ſuch a Congregation

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gregation, as wherein great Scandalls and offences are constantly given, so as they cannot with a good conscience, and without dishonour to God and his Ordinances communicate with such an assembly, wherof the greatest part consists of prophane and ignorant persons (as aforesaid) but are forced to joyne themselves with such Congregations, where no such offences be: shall any Ministers be so unchristian, as to envy this? Or if they doe, let them reforme their owne Congregations, and take away all such scandalls, and separate the precious from the vile, and administer the Ordinances of Christ purely and holily, and set up Christs government in their Congregations, that so they may retaine those honest soules, which otherwise are forced to forsake the pudled streames, to injoy the sweet, fresh, and pure fountaine of living waters. Nor will the Ministers and Pastors of such Independent Congregations looke after any such wages, as the Parochiall Ministers challenge to themselves, as Tithes, or the like. No surely, they are, and will be content that such competent maintenance as the members of their severall Congregations respectively, shall freely, without any compulsion (as is used in Tithes) allow unto them. Now let any that professe to be the Ministers of Christ, maligne other, either Ministers or people, who are desirous to injoy Christs Ordinances, in as much purity as may be, and with as much liberty of conscience, as *Christ* hath priviledged them withall.

Obj. But the Parliament now being about a Reformation, as the removing of all Antichristianisme and Popery, as the Hierarchicall Government, and Ceremonies purged, the Liturgie, and Discipline, what government shall be set up in this Nationall Church?

Ans.

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Ans. The Lord strengthen and direct the Parliament in so great and glorious a Worke; an blessed be God who hath raised up such instruments for such a worke, and who hath put in their hearts to be so zealous and unanimous for the perfecting of it so farre as is possible, and may stand with the nature of a Nationall Church. But as for the manner of Government of a Nationall Church, because it hath no patterne in the Scripture now under the *Gospell*, who can herein prescribe or advise any thing. But first of all, if good Preachers be set up in every Parish, the noughty and scandalous being removed, and then for the better and speedier supply hereof, the Universities and Grammer Schooles be purged, and better Governors and Ministers set up: so shall the people be taught, that they perish not for want of knowledge. As for the manner of Government of Parishes, whether by a Presbytry, or otherwise, that (as being, for its externall forme and frame, of a politicke Nation) I leave to the prudence of those, in whose hands it is put: let it be what it will, so as still a due respect be had to those Congregations, and Churches, which desire an exemption and liberty of injoying Christs ordinances in such a purity, as a nationall Church, is not possibly capable of. And what ever Liturgie, or Ceremonies, or Discipline, are left to accompany this Naturall Church-government, tis indifferent with us; so we may injoy our Christian liberty in the true use of such ordinances, and of such independent Church-government, as Christ the onely Law-giver of his Church, and Lord of the conscience, hath left unto us in his word.

Obj. But independent Churches, being absolute in themselves, and exempted from a superior Iurisdic-

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on of others, and yet not exempt from possibility of erring: what Law is left to reduce them from their error? or that they persist in their obstinacy, what power shall censure, or correct them.

Ans. First, they have Christs Law to regulate them. Secondly, they have the Law of Christ, which is by love to serve one another. They have the law of association and confederation with other Churches to consult, advise, and conferre with, in matters of doubt or question. And if after all other remedies any be obstinate in his, or their error, they are liable to excommunication, either in the same Congregation, if it be a particular person, and the error great, or from other Churches, if the whole Congregation have offended, and do stiffely maintaine a dangerous error, which yet is rarely secue in a well constituted Congregation, consisting of meet members. And if at any time such a thing should fall out, which cannot grow but from some roote of apostacy, particular or generall: if the offence doe reflect also upon the Laws of the civill state, which are made against knowne Heresies, or blasphemy, or Idolrtry, and the like, the offenders are obnoxious to the civill power. So little feare there is, that any independant Congregation, or any member thereof, should be exempt from condigne censure, where just cause is given either Ecclesiasticall or civill.

FINIS.

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